World-Literary Resources and Energetic Materialism

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"A car won't go without fuel, and neither will you."

This was the proverbial mantra my lorry-driving father would use to encourage his skinny teenage daughter – with a nascent interest in cars – to eat more, to "get more down", even though our family resources were limited and the price of food a regular source of dispute. It stands as family wisdom, and perhaps rightly so given its demand for self-care and the ways in which humans and their machines do rely on their respective fuels to "go" – to be, to move and seemingly to be free, whether conceived in terms of Timothy Mitchell's *Carbon Democracy* (2011), or experienced as a university education paid for with lorry-driving overtime, as in my case. It is also the adage that my co-editor, Lucy Potter, and I have repeatedly used (sometimes ironically) in our shared and resource-linked thinking: on food culture and neoliberalization; on the interwoven consequences of the commodity crises and global economic downturn of the mid-2000s; on the economic examples provided by our families – with my father's recent redundancy from an ailing Tesco sitting alongside the retirement enjoyed by her parents as members of a postwar oil-boom generation; and in relation to our respective efforts to create and sustain healthy versions of academic life. The slogan clearly echoes common thinking about human bodies as being like machines, and is used in spite of our knowledge that such thinking is to the detriment of workers around the world and that the vitality of life is not commensurate with the

life of machines, however "smart" they may be. It also neatly demonstrates how the language and symbolic currency of petromodernity determines views of human existence, including human survival, even though fossil fuels are not essential to life in the same way as food (notwithstanding their centrality to global food provision) and are, in fact, notably endangering for humans, animals, ecologies and our shared planet. Indeed, under neoliberal capital the entire "web of life" (see Moore 2015) is pegged to a deepening and seemingly disaster-bound culture of extractivism that is enamoured with fossil fuels, mining these and other socio-ecological "resources" in increasingly intensive and risky ways, as if capitalism's unending and exponential search for value is somehow manageable. This is the crux of our predicament and the baseline premise for this special issue: that we, the planet and the "resources" all species need to survive – including, air, water and food, but also multiple and intersecting human and non-human energy regimes – are presently caught within capitalist modernity's systemic logic of evermore surplus and the uneven and uncontainable consequences of our present failure to rethink, reimagine and reorganize ourselves for a collective stewardship of the world.

Resource Angst and "Worlded" Relationality

Today resource and energy "angst" are common (MacDonald 2013, 1; 19). The idea that material resources are insufficient and/or rapidly depleting, and that our oil-slicked energy regimes will soon implode, seems to be everywhere. Many recognize that cumulative climatological instability, compound food/water/energy insecurity and militarized oil/resource combat sit alongside neoliberal asset stripping, expanding financialization and new socio-ecological as well as psychic modes of enclosure and appropriation. Consequently, in the ongoing wake of global financial crisis, we are used to talk of a "convergence of crises", the ubiquitous "tough choices"

rhetoric of neoliberal politicians and the all-pervading spectre of apocalypse. In fact, across the neoliberal period, as Frederick Buell (2003) explains, we have moved from the "shock" of apocalyptic visions to their quotidian reality and our collective immersion within a "sobering picture" (35) of world-ending crisis as a "way of life". Partly the success of green activism since the 1960s, and partly a consequence of its corporate co-option after the 1980s, a new state of crisis awareness has emerged, characterized by what Buell (2012) calls "hyperexuberance": the peculiarly familiar combination of "exuberance and catastrophe" (291), which orientates us towards an oil-fuelled apocalypse that is simultaneously urgent, slow and always-already in progress, with humans, as a species, both helpless and responsible.

Such resource- and energy-driven apocalyptic ordinariness has prompted vast and multifaceted reaction: with political-military-industrial efforts to establish or "shore-up" supply lines; massive enviro-science efforts to manage/slow/reverse climate change and its consequences; engineering moves towards new techniques for energy creation and distribution; financial-technical plays with consequence off-shoring, as in carbon off-setting and waste relocation; and burgeoning literary-cultural interests in ecocriticism, foodways, energy regimes, disaster and apocalypse. Behind much of the thinking involved, though, lie two simple and dominant narratives. First, that Society and Nature are opposed and in conflict, with humans posited as the cause of planetary degradation, as in the Anthropocene hypothesis that offers an undifferentiated mass of anthropos as eco-culprits, despite the minimal carbon footprint of the world's (semi-)peripheral populations who are typically on the receiving end of core surplus creation and consumptive excess. And, second, that this pitched battle between Society and Nature took off with the rise of fossil fuels, industrialization and its global imperialism from the 1800s onwards, in what can be termed the "Two Centuries Model" of capitalism, which

emphasizes the dominance of coal, steam, oil and electricity, and the Great Acceleration of the twentieth century that these energy resources enabled (Moore 2015, 92). What evades most analyses, though, is how these two centuries of energetic excess fit within the longue durée of capitalist modernity and how we might need to think, not in terms of a "converging" of crises "in which one can add 'climate' or 'ecology' to the list", but rather in terms of a world-systemic crisis of capital, in an approach that Jason W. Moore describes as "*synthetic*" rather than "*additive*", and that "demonstrates a *relational* reconceptualization" of capitalism that pushes past the dualism of Society and (or versus) Nature (40-41) and corresponding misidentification of an "Anthropocence" rather than what he calls the "Capitalocene" (173). As Moore explains, this would enable a new appreciation of capitalism's perpetual undervaluing of the "work/energy" regimes required for capital's (actually diminishing) returns (14-15), as well as a new understanding of the world that we unevenly co-produce and co-inhabit.

To do this, to think in terms of relationality and to reconfigure capitalism's uneven value relations, we need to mobilize insights from new and existing fields attentive to resource and work/energy debates and reposition them within a fuller conceptualization of capital and its culture – including culture's role in the contemporary continuation of capitalism as well as its capacity for resistance and ability to create change. Consequently, this special issue draws together three emergent, related and relational fields or modes of enquiry – the energy humanities, world-ecology and world-literary comparativism – that are tightly bound to the central concerns of postcolonial studies, including its ecocritical turn, and have interrelated interests in resource commodities, work/energy regimes and questions of transformational resistance. Each of these formations pushes past established disciplinary constraints: in response to the energy sciences; in the context of political economy and environmental history; within

postcolonial and literary studies; and across the arts and humanities more generally. And we might also want to note that collective endeavour has been a hallmark of these loosely set and intersecting groupings – via the Petrocultures Research Group, the World-Ecology Network and WReC (the Warwick Research Collective) plus its offshoots – in a push towards new thinking routes and a push back against neoliberal academia's atomizing insistence on competitive self-destruction. Expressly materialist in their understanding of culture, these domains approach material resources in a manner that is broad and worldly, yet historically focused and theoretically nuanced. They also share a sense of critical ambition directed towards resourceful resistance and systemic transformation, and foreground much that has been undervalued in contemporary academic criticism.

In taking up the critical impulses of this three-fields intersection, this special issue asks us to rethink resources and their connection/s to culture within and across differentiated sites, settings and milieus of the capitalist world-system. It configures debates about the world-literary system via world-ecology, and through the dynamic interplay between material resources, material culture and material acts of resistance. It recognizes that resources can be resistive – that they are increasingly hard to mine, to frack, to extract – and that collective and pivotal resistance arises at particular sites of extraction and more widely in response to capital's systemic extractivism. It also positions literary and other cultural texts as themselves resources, whether knowingly invested in resistance movements or by functioning as "worldly" texts in other ways. "Resistant Resources/Resources of Resistance" thus builds upon groundwork already laid across the energy humanities, world-ecology and world-literary thinking – including work published in this journal – but provides a particular developmental move forward. Specifically, it offers a set of articles that examine world-literary resources and are individually and collectively invested in what

Marx understood as the "material force" of theoretical work, or what we might call "energetic materialism". That is, a Marxist-inflected historical, relational and dialectical approach to the material culture of capitalism's resource-bound work/energy systems that helps move thinking beyond the resource-conflict dystopias and benign world-ending consensual paralysis synonymous with neoliberal capital. In doing so, the issue makes a striking claim for the resourcefulness of "worlded" literary-critical practice, especially for resistive and world-(re)fashioning purposes.

Resources and Postcolonial Literary Studies

In a number of ways postcolonial literary studies has been and remains a resourceful and resource- and environment-oriented field. It understands that "to deny colonial and environmental histories as mutually constitutive misses the central role the exploitation of natural resources plays in any imperial project" (DeLoughrey and Handley 2011, 10), and that "ideas of animal treatment and land use initially formed in Europe predisposed colonial administrators and settlers to a facile belief in the apparently limitless resources of settler colonies" (Huggan and Tiffin 2015, 8), as well as all other imperial and neo-imperial localities. The uneven and impoverishing consequences of empire, including its resource extraction and corresponding underdevelopment strategies, have long been recognized. In field-defining texts the significance of resource ownership and exploitation is built-in to explanations of imperial culture, including literary culture, as well as anti- and post-colonial struggles for independence. For example, Edward Said's (1994) famed analysis of the "references to Antigua" (89) in Jane Austin's *Mansfield Park* flags up the resource riches of imperial Britain's canonical literary texts and literary-colonial families. As he writes:

> The Betrams' usable colony […] can be read as pointing forward to Charles Gould's San Tomé mine in *Nostromo*, or the Wilcoxes' Anglo-Imperial Rubber Company in Forster's *Howard's End*, or to any of these distant but convenient treasure spots in *Great Expectations*, in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *Heart of Darkness* – resources to be visited, talked about, described or appreciated for domestic reasons, for local metropolitan benefit. (93)

In his unpacking of the bind between empire and culture, Said embeds a "worlding" of Raymond Williams's materialist explanation of the labour and resource relations of country house culture, of the uneven yet mutually constitutive connections between town/core and country/periphery. Said also goes on to make explicit the manner in which European powers needed and utilized their "colonial territories" for both "manpower and resources" in very obvious ways up to and during World War One (197), before altered relations and resource access avenues had to be renegotiated in the wake of World War Two and widespread independence agitation.

It is in this context that Franz Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth* ([1963] 2001), writes of the post-independence disjunct between the resource claims of new national elites, the "[s]poilt children of colonialism" who "organize the loot of whatever resources exist", and the simple request from newly independent peoples "that all resources are shared" (37-38). In his powerful rendering of "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness", Fanon describes how the "mother country" had been content "with bringing to light the [colony's] natural resources, which it extracts, and exports" to meet its own needs (127). He also diagnoses the "precariousness" of the newly independent nation's "resources", and the merely "bookish acquaintance with the actual

and potential resources of their country's soil and mineral deposits" (121) possessed by the emergent middle class, which, alongside a structural lack of "material and intellectual resources" (122), keeps the seemingly "post-colonial" country tied to the "cult of local products" (121) – that is, tied to the agricultural monocrop or raw material export regimes of imperial capitalism.

We might say, quite fairly, that the materialist and Marxian implications of such insights – especially Fanon's – have been overshadowed in postcolonial studies by the field's broad allegiance to poststructuralism (see Lazarus 2011). However, a forceful strain of materialist thinking has remained, often shaping or at least influencing postcolonial ecocritical debates. Since the early 2000s postcolonial studies has reconfigured cultural responses to land, labour and animal studies in light of empire and its aftermaths. Across agenda-setting critical readers, anthologies, edited collections and monographs, the field has sought to fathom the unequal effects of resource (mis)management, ecosystem disruption, environmental disaster and its multi-scalar impacts, most prominently as they are experienced in peripheral settings and sites of resource extraction. A newly resourceful ecocritical lens has likewise been brought to bear on established postcolonial texts – as with yam-based readings of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), enviro-paradise critiques of Walcott's *Omeros* (1990) and toxic-fallout reactions to Sinha's *Animal's People* (2007) – and mobilized in national or regional literary studies. On a larger scale, resources have become critical nodes of contestation within comparative studies of landscapes and forests, foodways and waterways, trading routes, tourist trails and eco-disasters. Although these are often couched in terms of neoliberal globalization, in some of the most compelling work the interaction between world literature, its production, consumption and circulation, and the resource- and energy-extraction regimes it registers comes to the fore. A pertinent example is Jennifer Wenzel's (2006) analysis of the ivory, rubber, copper, cobalt,

uranium and coltan that have not only sustained colonizing interests in the Congo across several centuries, but have poignant connections with canonical literary texts as well as conspicuous ties with publication processes and prize-winning opportunities for contemporary authors.

In Rob Nixon's influential *Slow Violence* (2011), "resource enclaves" (71) and their corresponding "resource rebels" (41) – most often indigenous and other disenfranchised groups – are described as being caught within the "resource curse" (68); a predicament whereby a determining attachment to a single resource and its dominant export culture palpably creates or exacerbates internal unevenness within generally peripheral sites of extraction, production and import/export, while also solidifying the debt- and resource-bondage of such peripheralized nation-states, regions and populations. The term "resource curse" therefore "holds in taut suspense notions of fortune and misfortune" and suggests that "the vulnerability of the world of solid, useful goods to spiritual forces – the curses and blessings that have profound material effects" (69). These effects, including the "privatising" of supposedly independent states, their export-based "policy-making" and much of their national infrastructure, social relations and labour patterns (Huggan and Tiffin 2015, 39, 48), reverberate across the articles below. So, too, does Nixon's investment in the "clash of temporal perspectives" (17) that structures resource wars, where neoliberal capital's desire for short-term gain is set against the long-term protectivism of local inhabitants and indigenes, as well as his sense of the eco-calamities of "petro-despotism" that are laid bare in Abdelrahman Munif's *Cities of Salt* – a novel that receives attention across this special issue. Indeed, what has emerged within and beyond postcolonial studies, including via the writing of Nixon, Wenzel and others, is a sustained interest in the (literary) cultures of oil and the petro-resources that simultaneously empower, endanger and immobilize these cultures *and* their globalized products. Usefully, then, at the close

of the issue, Wenzel explains how an investment in postcolonial ecocriticism and the historical analysis of imperialism can, and does, influence the emergent energy humanities as well as the energetic, environmental and resource-based literary studies it has already helped to spawn.

World-Literary/World-Ecological Resources

The growing interest in fossil fuel resources and their worldly energetics across the 2000s was further fuelled by Patricia Yaeger's (2011) incitement to create an "energy-driven literary theory" (307) that would probe the relationship between "energy resources and literature" (305), specifically the "energy unconscious" (309) of literary texts and other cultural commodities. As Wenzel elaborates below, the emergence of the energy humanities owes much to this provocation, but also to its energetic uptake by postcolonial-inflected literary-cultural materialists like Imre Szeman, Graeme MacDonald and Wenzel herself (all included here). Premised on an appreciation of culture's role in establishing, maintaining and transforming resource and work/energy regimes, this new field excavates the "energopolitics" (a kind of energy-biopolitics combination), "energopower" (an alternative genealogy of modern power) and "crude aesthetics" of our petroculture (see Boyer 2014; Boyer and Szeman 2014; Szeman 2012). It posits that we exist at an "impasse" of energy and capital that the humanities – with their unique ability to decode, explain and ethically (re)shape the world – can help us transcend. While overlapping with broader energy-based political science and neoliberalism debates, the energy humanities has pitched a culturally materialist and empire-informed stake into today's intellectual ground, particularly regarding (world-)literary studies. Energy humanists are increasingly working to unmask the variously fictitious and material forces of literature, or the "energy *of fiction*", as well as the imagined resources and "energy *in fiction*" (MacDonald 2013,

3; emphasis in original), and thereby helping to uncover the *Capital Fictions* (2013) that Erika Beckman has already begun to trace within texts arising from Latin American "export frontiers". What must come with this new materialist perspective, though, is a systemic and relational conception of capitalism and culture, and a commitment to a "worlded" mode of reading capable of grasping this systemic and uneven relationality. It is for this reason that the energy humanities is here placed in close dialogue with both world-ecology and world-literary criticism.

World-ecology is a vibrant reconceptualization of nature-society relations under capital. In *Capitalism in the Web of Life* (2015), Moore defines this "new paradigm" (3) as one that understands capitalism as "*a way of organising nature*" (2; emphasis in original), as itself a world-ecological regime of world-historical import. Moore unpacks the "central thesis" of world-ecology, explaining that:

> capitalism is historically coherent […] from the long sixteenth century; co-produced by human and extra-human natures in the web of life; and cohered by a "law of value" that is a "law" of Cheap Nature. At the core of this law is the ongoing, radically expansive, and relentlessly innovative quest to turn the work/energy of the biosphere into capital (value in motion). (14)

For Moore, world-ecology names both "a *method* of bounding and bundling the human/extra-human/web of life relations" and "a *framework* for theorizing the manifold forms of the human experience, past and present" (28; emphasis in original). Pivotal, here, is the jettisoning of Nature versus Society in a sophisticated new dialectical vision of "capitalism-in-nature/nature-in-capitalism" (13), where nature is understood as a "web of life" that includes all human and

"extra-human" forms in their messily complex interrelations, and where the "web of life" must be historicized in relation to capitalist modernity and capitalism's peculiar "law of value" – that is, its creation of "Cheap Nature".

The key strengths of the world-ecological method are worth enumerating here. First, working out from the thinking of Immanuel Wallerstein and Giovanni Arrighi, world-ecology allows us to historicize capitalism's longue durée and its century-long cycles of accumulation in relation to long-wave energy and "ecological regimes" (53). Second, it foregrounds the "commodity frontiers" (10) and "ecological surplus" (95) created, primarily, from "the Four Cheaps of labour-power, food, energy, and raw materials" (17). Third, it has a clear sense of how these and other "cheap" resources have enabled the world-historical cycles of mutation, expansion and ongoing "deepening" of capitalism's systemic "appropriation of unpaid work/energy" (29), especially through the history of imperialism. Fourth, it offers a "worlded", webbed and multi-scalar way of grappling with human and "extra-human" relations, overturning the empty and dualist abstractions of Nature and Humans/Society which characterize capitalism's ability to plunder and exploit. And finally (for now), it recognizes that, as a system of "endless accumulation" (91), capitalism is a system of "cyclical" and "cumulative" crisis-formation (11), unfolding through world-ecological revolutions and resulting in the signal crisis of the neoliberal regime – a potentially epochal (rather than developmental) crisis because capitalism has, in effect, destroyed its own mechanisms for self-renewal. Moore therefore suggests caution in response to the discursive panic induced by individual resource "peaks" – as exemplified by "peak oil" narratives – when what we are experiencing is in fact a system-wide crisis of "negative-value" (278) (where accumulated ecological debts yield diminishing and endangering returns) and the corresponding "closure" of capitalism's geographical, ecological

and commodity/waste frontiers. For Moore, it is actually "peak appropriation" (105-106) – as the exhaustion of capitalism's ability to appropriate everything that previously constituted world-ecological surplus – that is the fundamental problem facing capitalism today.

Akin to Moore's argument for a "worlding" of ecology under capital, materialist responses to the ongoing limitations of postcolonial literature and the rise of "World Literature" have called for an explicitly "worlded" comparative literary study that extends Franco Moretti's (2000) theorization of the "world-literary system" as "*one*, and unequal" (56; emphasis in original), and fleshes out its methodological strategies and gains. This special issue tacks the same course, continuing and extending the world-literary investments put forth in the 2012 *JPW* special issue "Postcolonial and World Literature", edited by James Graham, Sharae Deckard and Mike Niblett (all contributors here). This issue was itself closely bound to the WReC's (2015) "new theory of world-literature" as the literature of the "combined and uneven" realities of the capitalist-world system – a system that "produces unevenness" (12) and so ensures that there is never a "level playing field" (22) for world literature. The 2012 *JPW* editorial foregrounds the tradition of materialist critique running through postcolonial thinking that has, since the field's inception, sought to call postcolonial studies to account for its failure to position imperialism and colonialism within the longer history of the capitalist world-system; a failure that has left the field poorly equipped to intervene in debates about late capital (see also Lazarus 2011). The editorial also warns of the dangers of instantiating "World Literature" as a field of "the canon writ large", as the labelling-home for those "transcendent works" that underpin the cultural capital of "global elites" (465) – and, I would add, do so in ways that are notably similar to English Literature's disciplinary imperialism and its extension into euro-comparativism. Rather than seeking to establish a new and yet still narrow canon – when we know that, as Jameson

explains, the bind of single authors and single texts in small canons for close-reading purposes is key to "preventing genuinely social and historical problems from intruding" (Jameson 1988, 119; also cited in Szeman 1999) – a world-literary approach debunks canonicity and its inherently elitist value judgements. But it also requires a newly energetic materialism invested in systemic reading practices by which the inequities of capitalism's unevenly combined relations, patterns, cycles and disruption/s can be analysed. Indeed, world-literary analysis provides new scales both of and for comparison of texts, forms and sites of literary production and consumption that stretch far beyond anything like a "canon". It also allows for recognition of what Jameson terms the "simultaneity of the non-simultaneous" (quoted in WReC 2015, 135), and thereby enables readings of texts in relation to the multiform violence of (often resource-determined) incorporation into the world-system. Such readings tackle the thematic content of texts, but are also, perhaps more tellingly, oriented toward the formal qualities of works, emphasizing questions of genre and form, and their inflections of systemic dynamics. This has implications for the articles to follow. Most examine a specific resource or resources present in their chosen text/s, but they also attend to the formal and aesthetic registration of the systemic unevenness that is manifested, for example, in the re-appearance of the (eco)gothic or other irrealist tropes. Several of these readings are also concerned with the destabilizing of established generic tropes within newly energetic textual forms, especially as these interact with capitalism's "world-ecological revolutions" (Moore 2015, 20). Collectively, then, the articles breath additional textual and analytical life into Niblett's (2012) pertinent explanation of the capitalist world-system as "not just a world-economy but also a world-ecology", such that world literature is also "the literature of the capitalist world-ecology" (16), which in turn reveals itself in the themes, forms, genres, production practices and circulatory networks of world-literary and cultural texts.

As stated above, and as evidenced throughout the issue, world-ecology, world-literature and the energy humanities all share an investment in materialist critique but understand such critique as functioning systemically and relationally. Each of these domains would recognize the import of what Buell (2003), revisiting Rachel Carson's 1962 environmental classic *Silent Spring*, describes as our accumulated "body burden" (117): the "total of all environmental contaminants that people have stored up in their bodies", via "all routes of entry (inhalation, ingestion, and skin absorption) and all sources (food, air, water, workplace, home and so forth)" (117). However, they would also all read this "body burden" in terms of the historically particular, unequal and unfolding relations that bring it into being, and therefore resist seeing the body as merely a discreet, if "vital", material "object". This is important for our conception of resources and energetic materialism. Resources are typically thought of as the "raw" materials that are extracted and "converted" into commodities and energy, where energy is the ability to act or, better still, to work. Hence, resources are not simply "stuff" – they are not just (or not really) the objects and physical materials drawn from nature, and energy is not an invisible power or force. In his 1999 editorial "A Manifesto for Materialism", Szeman attempts to push past the common perception of materialism as a "critical practice that focuses on matter" (1), commonly associated with reductive readings of cultural texts as mere windows onto the world. In contrast, he defines materialism as an attempt to "understand the processes of literary and cultural transubstantiation" (3), where a concentration on the "material conditions" (3), that are all-too-often relegated to the sidelines, can be "concrete without being reductive, determinate without being determining (6). The energy humanities is directed toward carrying through this kind of materialist vision, addressing what MacDonald (2013) calls the "hierarchy of material […] forms" within petroculture (10), (re)materializing petromodernity's immaterial self-

presentation, and insisting on the material consequences *for* and radical potential *of* culture in its ability to "recast" our relationship with "a material life sustained and underpinned by hegemonic forms of energy extraction, production and consumption" (MacDonald 3).

Moore (2015) similarly cautions against the fetishized vision of resources as simply material "stuff", or what Bourdieu terms "substantialist" thinking, which sees "substances as prior *to*, and independently *of*, events and fields of relations", enables human exceptionalism and reifies unpaid work/energy as the seemingly "free gifts" of nature (178). Moore argues that cultural materialism requires "a relational rather than substantialist" perspective because the movement of "resources, the circuits of capital, and the struggles of classes and states form a dialectical whole" (179), and "[w]hat 'counts' as a resource shifts as […] new historical natures emerge" (196). For Moore, the "historiography of resource extraction has seldom taken the relational point seriously" despite resources being "actively co-produced" as "markers and creators of the historical natures that help to define the scope of opportunity and constraint in successive eras of capitalist development" (196). This world-ecological and thus necessarily relational perspective is perhaps best illustrated by his example of coal:

> By itself, coal is only a potential actant; bundled with the relations of class, empires, and appropriation in the nineteenth century however […] it becomes a way of naming a mass commodity whose presence was felt in every strategic relation of nineteenth-century capitalism. (196)

To hammer home the importance of *resource-relations* (rather than resources per se), Moore offers a pithy, quasi-charitable proverb: "Shut down a coal plant, and you can slow global

warming for a day; shut down the relations that made the coal plant, and you can stop if for good" (172).

The interplay between world-ecology and world-literature has developed across a run of recent publications. As has been suggested, world-literary studies has always represented a desire to "recalibrate the emergent field of world literature from a materialist perspective" (James et al 2012, 466) and, in so doing, to move beyond the limitations inscribed into postcolonial studies from its institutional beginnings (see Lazarus 2011). Part of this effort has involved revisiting the "emergence of *Weltliteratur*" in relation to the work of Marx and Engels (Niblett 2012, 15), and in relation to what John Bellamy Foster has labelled *Marx's Ecology* (2000). Rather than a mere "greening" of capital, though, world-ecology and world-literature have returned to Marx's famed explanation of soil chemistry and "metabolic rift" in order to situate such thinking within a systemic rendering of capitalist modernity (see Niblett 2012; Moore 2015). This is crucial for Moore's thorough and agile reworking of Marx's conception of value to account for the un(der)paid work/energy on which accumulation rests. Relatedly, Moore draws on Stephen Shapiro's (2014) Marxian invocation of the "cultural fix" – expanding on David Harvey's "spatial fix" – to capture how culture is required to uphold neoliberal capital by normalizing increasingly flexible and invasive forms of energetic extraction and naturalizing, not only unpaid human work, "but also new epoch making practices of appropriating unpaid work by extra-human natures" (Moore 2015, 198; also see Shapiro 2014). Together, Shapiro and Moore have thus helped underline the centrality of culture and cultural production to the cyclical continuity of capitalism, and specifically to the current – perhaps final – circuit of capitalist accumulation, that of neoliberal capital.

At this point, then, I think it's necessary to make a few additional points. First, a note on hyphenation seems useful, if only to reinforce explanations that precede this publication. For anyone coming to world-literary studies (with a hyphen) for the first time, the hyphenation may strike as strange, but it should be recognized as a *relational* and *systemic* gesture because the hyphen is "a hyphen derived from that of the world-system" (WReC 2015, 8), and is therefore shared with world-ecology. It is thus "world-literary criticism" that best describes the critical work in and of this special issue, as it did *JPW*'s earlier world-literary offering (James et al 2012, 468). Second, this world-literary method does not encode a bypassing of aesthetics, nor does not it mean overlooking the particularities of singular works, or groups of works, or crudely mapping literature onto the "reality" of the world, as Ben Etherington (2012) fears. Instead, its investment in "distant reading" marks an effort at reading uneven *relations* – aesthetic and systemic – of, within and between world-literary texts. World-literary analysis does not require what Etherington describes as the "collating and comparing of criticism from area specialists" (549), though it may draw on their insights. Rather, it demands a systemically energetic materialism in order to contend with the totality and internal "worldiness" of particular texts, textual tropes, patterns, characteristics etc., even as it engages in comparative readings across times, spaces, cyclical points and resource cultures or nodes of resource extraction. It may be that parts of world-literary criticism become more "social science" minded in tracking literary production, circulation and consumption routes, as Etherington suggests (549), but this does not inhibit the ability of world-literary critics to analyse literary and cultural aesthetics systematically. In fact, it might add to our ability to do so. Third, it is worth signposting the need to link our thinking about resourceful literary and cultural texts within the world-system to the work/energy relations, value logics and extractive culture of academic labour, especially given that academia has been

at the forefront of neoliberalization. As academics (i.e. critical value-producers) we, too, need to inculcate a resource- and energy-aware materialism in both our everyday work practices and our academic production, relinquishing the inequality-maintenance enabled by narratives of cosmopolitanism and scholarly, creative or intellectual freedom that don't stack up against material inequalities and their growth. We need to perceive, describe and intercede in systemic processes and problems, tackling their complexity and their world-ecological scope and scale, and do so with a renewed sensitivity to the connections between our own work/energy excesses and resource depletions as well as (and as part of) those of the world-system. Our resilience and our resistance are relational, material and consequential; our "impacts", likewise, should be liberatory and world-historical rather than merely measureable and institutional. The articles that follow are set to help us continue down this hyphenated road.

Our World-Literary and Resistive "Resource Fictions"

This special issue builds on the "Resistant Resources" lecture series co-organized by the editors in Spring 2015, itself an outgrowth of the Postcolonial Studies Association's (PSA's) 2014 "Resources of Resistance" conference, both of which were held at the University of York. The majority of articles have roots in these events, and all contributors are part of wider, overlapping networks of materialist scholarship working in and/or across resource-inflected world-literary debates. Consequently, the articles often cross-reference particular methodological insights and steps forward, and while tracking their own critical paths in relation to specific locations, resources, authors and texts, they also share a "worlded" horizon that helps bind their literary-critical efforts together even as they stretch outwards: across novels, poetry, film and

documentaries; across coal, oil, plastic, food, land and activism; and across the UK and North America, the Caribbean and Latin America, Southern Africa and the Middle East.

The opening two articles elaborate on the purpose and critical import of the energy humanities in relation to literary studies. Taking up a number of Yaeger's prompts, Szeman calls attention to our fossil-fuelled energy culture, the possibilities of "energy periodization" and the need to recognize that "the imaginative resources of literature are always-already linked to […] physical resources". Aligning himself with new systemic modes of reading, Szeman cautions that the "life of surplus energy" may reside in the "very practice of literature", as well as in its "scenes and characters", and that "incorporating energy might unnerve not just the how but the *why*" of literary studies itself. MacDonald's contribution pushes home the need for a systemic vision and methodology, arguing that "oil's ubiquity" and global reach requires a "worlded" ecological comparativism in the manner advanced by Niblett's earlier writing. Like Szeman here, and Amitav Ghosh before them, MacDonald analyses Abdelrahman Munif's *Cities of Salt* (1984) but places it alongside George MacKay Brown's Scottish novel, *Greenvoe* (1972). Reading these "oil-encounter novels" against the "backdraft of [1970s] restructurings", MacDonald sees the "monstrous" effects of oil in the content, structure, style and form of these works, and contends that these and other related texts "offer a means of aesthetic and environmental resistance to the carbonizing determinations of an unsustainable fuel-ecological world-system".

The next three articles share a world-ecological approach to resource-bound resistance in literary-cultural texts that, together, chart the petro-transitions of the twentieth century. In a crisp and telling execution of his own world-ecological/world-literary method, Niblett unpacks the relational links between the labour struggles in Ellen Wilkinson's *Clash* (1929), depicting UK coal miners during the 1926 General Strike, and Ralph de Boissière's *Crown Jewel* (1952),

narrating the 1930s oil industry strikes in Trinidad. In showing how these texts register and redeploy "the transition from the global coal system to the global oil system", Niblett is able to demonstrate that the "energies generated by mass strike action […] fundamentally shape the narrative energetics of their fiction", including disruptions and innovations at the level of form and genre. The next article moves us from the 1930s to the 1960s, and the "oil-fuelled zombie revolution" that arrives with George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968). Developing her vision of the zombie as an "ecological figure" that is "animated" by cyclical "world-ecological revolutions", Kerstin Oloff explains the move from the "saccharine irrealism" of the Haitian sugar-zombie to the petro-aesthetics of the new "cannibalizing" zombie-hordes found in Romero's film. In the process, she tracks Romero's encoding of the intermingled resistances and contradictions contained within the Green Revolution, American race relations and Pennsylvania's ties with oil, including the displacement of small-holder farming, and the petro-production realities of the film industry. Next, Treasa Deloughry picks up the 1920s invention of plastic – one of petromodernity's most prolific and eco-destructive products – and connects it to the neoliberal nightmares of post-1970s Latin America through an original and engaging examination of Karen Tei Yasmashita's *Through the Arch of the Rainforest* (1990). Focusing on Yamashita's fictional rendering of Matacão – an imagined plastic bedrock in Brazil's Amazon rainforest that, once mined, brings a new "boom" because of its (ir)realist ability to become any other material substance – Deloughry excavates the narrative's allegorical relation to neoliberal Structural Adjustment Programs and plastic's pivotal role in maintaining US hegemony. She also examines the emergence of a plastic-eating bacteria and typhus epidemic in the novel, skilfully applying Moore's conception of declining food yields and super-viruses as forms of extra-human resistance to neoliberalism's socio-ecological exhaustion.

In a step away from explicitly oil-bound resources, the next two articles grapple with literary contestations over land and labour, agriculture and foodways – topics that may initially strike as more traditionally "postcolonial", but are here taken up via world-ecological/world-literary perspectives. In a typically ambitious and field-shaping comparison, Deckard traverses "literary mediations of the world-historical movement of cacao frontiers", establishing the "literature of cacao" and its irrealist qualities in work from Pablo Antonio Cuadra in Nicaragua, Samuel Selvon in Trinidad, Jorge Amado in Brazil and Merle Collins in Grenada. Exploring "how literary critiques of cacao extractivism are counterposed to representations of vernacular foodways and social reproduction", Deckard's notably "worlded" contribution convincingly argues that "the aesthetics of provision foods are symbolically freighted, represented as 'resourceful' modes of agriculture that repudiate the undervaluing of human and extra-human work in plantation monoculture". With food requiring land, Graham foregrounds the gendered structures and symbolic valences of agriculture as he tackles Yvonne Vera's *The Stone Virgins* (2002), connecting Zimbabwean land reform and the structural violence perpetrated against women with what Moore calls "negative value" and the associated exhaustion of seemingly "cheap" natures and "virgin" frontier lands. Graham contends that, in Vera's novel, the leitmotifs of abjection and habitat are used to reveal how "the female body is invariably positioned abjectly at the nexus of colonial governance", "violent accumulation" and "negative value" within the *oeikos*.

In the last article, and in the interview that follows, the focus shifts slightly, helping to draw out the nuances and ambiguities of "resistance" in relation to the critical project of transformation. Anna Bernard's article incisively positions literary and other cultural texts as themselves "resources" – a claim that is built into the other articles, but is made explicit in the

texts she examines. Reading "documentary films and novels of anti-apartheid and Palestine solidary activists in the long 1970s", Bernard explores how such texts theorize "the resource value of cultural activism", work through a politicized adherence to the "documentary real" and "seek to preserve and sustain their ideas for transnational resistance movements to mobilize in the struggles over the distribution and control of resources that are yet to come". In Lucy Potter's interview with Wenzel, the cultural work of resistance and the critical resources "yet to come" are also at stake, as Wenzel reflects on the move from postcolonial ecocriticism to the energy humanities and more "worlded" approaches to ecology and literature, as well as the new methodologies and resourceful strategies necessary for interventionist academic thinking and pedagogical practice. Wenzel's interview also marks the passing of her friend and mentor, Professor Patricia Yaeger, in 2014 – a loss that cut short a field-determining voice for the energy humanities but one whose insights are recalled in a number of the pieces.

The special issue is also marked by another personal and professional loss. For the editors, and many of the contributors, the passing of Dr Anthony Carrigan in 2016 left a painful sense of bereavement as well as a pronounced critical gap in discussions of postcolonial tourism, disaster and environmental crisis. Anthony had provided one of the keynote lectures during the PSA conference and was the person who, at the close, reminded us of the need for *transformation* to be at the heart of our collective efforts. He was set to be one of our contributors here. Energetic and warm, insightful and engaged, Anthony is well remembered: as friend and colleague; as collaborator and contributor; as kindness and good humour. Nothing that can be said here can do his memory justice, but with much love to those closest to him, we nonetheless dedicate this journal issue to the spirit of his life and – without erasing intellectual differences and debates – the foresight of his work.

Notes on Contributor

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